

Subject: SEC News and a focus on Rush Memorial's 100th Anniversary Celebration

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FEATURE FOCUS



Rush Memorial - Celebrating 100 years as "the little church with the big heart"

Rush Memorial Church celebrated its 100th anniversary in September, with a 6-week series honoring different missions of the church and the people who lead them. This small but mighty church, known as "the little church with the big heart" began with the name "The People's Church" and was known for helping the poor in Atlanta. Throughout the hundred years that the congregation has served, it has been a leader in the Black community, starting one of the first private schools for Negro students in the 1920's, becoming a meeting place for the Civil Rights Movement, and the host to the first African American Boy

Scout troop in Atlanta. The church was renamed "Rush Memorial" to honor the first pastor, Dr. John A Rush during the tenure of the Dr. James Bond, the second pastor of the church.

One of the primary missions of Rush Memorial has been to support students of the Atlanta University Center Consortium, which includes Morehouse, Spelman, Clark Atlanta University, Interdenominational Theological Center, and the Morehouse School of Medicine. This has been a mission of the church throughout its history and helped to get the church heavily involved with the Civil Rights Movement, when it connected with Lonnie King and Julian Bond, then students at Morehouse College. It was too controversial for students to meet on their campuses so Rush Memorial offered them space to gather to plan and organize. Rush Memorial not only gave them a meeting space, but provided them with office space for the movement as well. Lonnie King was a leader for the Committee on the Appeal for Human Rights, and Julian Bond who influential in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and later became one of the first members of the Georgia House of Representatives and also served as the chair of the NAACP.

Today the church continues to serve students, providing for their needs while they are in school. Each year they welcome students back to school in the fall with a cookout on the church lawn. Dedicated members, such as Mavis McMullen, Robert Humphrey, and Brendi Lawson cook for the students during the week. Every Sunday Phillip and Shirley Jenkins, bring students to Golden Corral in a van where the students are so welcome there that they don't have to use the front door anymore. Most importantly, the church listens to the needs of the students and develops relationships with them. In return, the students have done great things for Rush Memorial as well. Michael Hayes, for instance, organized Rush's men's chorus while he was a student at Clark Atlanta University. Most recently, 20 students from Morehouse and Clark Atlanta University helped move furniture and prepare the church for fresh paint and new carpet in anticipation for the 100th anniversary celebration.

Rev. Lawrence E. Calbert, the current senior pastor of Rush Memorial, has served since 1989, bringing the church into greater involvement with the UCC by being involved at both the Conference and National levels. He has continued the drive for service in the community, heading up a building project for a new fellowship hall in 2010, dedicated to Pastor Emeritus Joseph E. Boone, a place where relationships can be fostered. Rev. Susan Mitchell also serves at Rush Memorial, as well as working for the National UCC in the Office of Philanthropy and Stewardship.

On October 10th, the city of Atlanta honored Rush Memorial for its long-standing work in the city. This year Rush Memorial was also honored by Rust College in Mississippi for its contributions to education and music.

Special thanks to Mrs. Regina Finklin, for sharing this history with the Conference. She has been a member at Rush Memorial since 1967. Her daughters, both in their 30s, are still very active in the church.

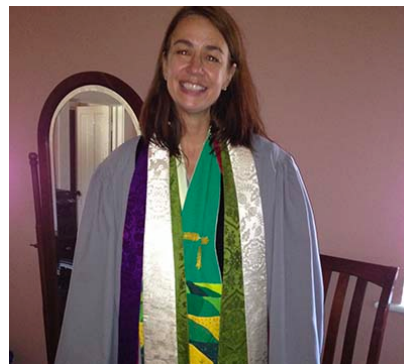
[You can see this article on the SECUCC website, with an added photo gallery by clicking here.](#)

CONFERENCE NEWS



Member In Discernment (MID) Retreat On October 26th, people throughout the Conference who are exploring ordination gathered to learn about the process, connect with other "members in discernment", and receive boundary training. These retreats happen in the fall and spring and are a great way to explore the ordination

CELEBRATION



Karen Richardson Dunn was ordained this past Sunday at Circular Church in Charleston. This photo shows Karen after the ordination wearing stoles that were presented to her as gifts for her ministry. She has answered a call to serve as Associate Pastor of Warren Wilson Presbyterian

process. Newly added to this retreat was training for existing pastors who are becoming mentors to MIDs through this process.

If you are interested in signing up for the next MID retreat, or are interested in exploring the ordination process, [please contact the Southeast Conference Office by email here.](#)

Peace Congregational Church Featured in Video for Clemson University Coming Out Day



Click on the image to view the video on youtube

Peace Congregational in Clemson, SC was proud to participate in the Coming Out Day in Clemson University, supporting students at the school who are coming out in during college. Mark Evans, student intern at Peace Congregational Church is featured in the video.

2013 Southern Regional UCC Women's Conference



"Connecting Lives in Changing Times" was the theme of the 2013 Southern Regional United Church of Christ Women's Conference in Live Oak, FL, October 18-20. The keynote speaker was Rev. Sandra Gourdet, Area Executive for the Africa Office of Global Ministries and the theological reflector was Rev. Elizabeth Clement. It was a wonderful weekend of

worship, community, learning, challenge, and fun in a beautiful setting.

Fourteen women (lay and clergy) from the Southeast Conference UCC area participated in this biannual event. Several of this group were first time attendees and some also led workshops.



Church, which is a part of Warren Wilson College in Asheville, NC.

Karen is from Mocksville, NC. She graduated with a major in English from Wake Forest University, and also from Wake Forest School of Divinity. After her studies, she worked for 20 years as an editor at Random House and Simon & Schuster. She and her family spent the last year in Northumberland, England, where she served as a minister for 7 rural congregations of the United Reformed Church of England (Presbyterian). She has also been active as an intern or lay minister in churches in Charleston (including Circular), Atlanta, Edisto Island and Winston-Salem. Karen is married to Ethan Dunn, with two sons: Dylan, 11, and Roan, 9. Karen's father is a retired Presbyterian pastor.

On October 27th **James Henry Banks Jr.** was installed as the pastor of Bethany Congregational UCC in Thomasville. James was born and raised in Thomasville, attended Mercer University in Macon, GA where he majored in biology and received a Bachelor of Science degree. He has also done course work towards a Master of Divinity at the Center for Biblical Studies in Tallahassee, Florida. He is also employed as a microbiologist at the Environmental Testing Laboratories in Thomasville. He has also been the owner of Banks Music since 1998. For some years he was the music director at Bethany Church, and then he returned to his roots in the A.M.E. Church where he has served as both a musician and later as pastor of various A.M.E. churches in Georgia since 2004. Now serving again at Bethany in this new capacity is like a double-homecoming for him, and a large ecumenical crowd gathered on the 27th to welcome him home!



Holy Trinity Community Church, UCC, member church of the SEC since 2006, will celebrate the opening of their new 450 seat sanctuary on Sunday, November 17th at 11:00 A.M. This project has taken almost three years to complete, from the first soil boring studies and topographical surveys to the finished product. In the interim, and since 2008, they have been having three Sunday worship services to accommodate the growing attendance. Pastor Cindy and the staff are looking forward to worshipping in the new sanctuary. She says of the coming celebration,

Photo left to right:

Marie Stampfl, Pleasant Hill Community, Pleasant Hill TN
 Mary Ruth, Pleasant Hill Community
 Dawn Hamer, Central Congregational, Atlanta
 Rebecca Kilmer, Pleasant Hill Community
 Joyce Myers-Brown, Central Congregational
 Nancy Sales, First Congregational, Birmingham
 Martha Lammers, Pleasant Hill Community
 Martene Stansbery, Central Congregational
 Carolyn Staton, Central Congregational
 Janeen Carrell, Pleasant Hill Community
 Iris Burnell, Pleasant Hill Community

(not in photo)

Patricia Lockett, Holy Trinity Community, Nashville
 Elizabeth Clement, First Congregational UCC, Atlanta
 Beth Knight, Pleasant Hill Community

The 2015 Southern Regional UCC Women's Conference will be at Camp Sumatanga, Gallant, AL, Oct 18-20, 2015, and will be hosted by women from the Southeast Conference. Mary Ruth of Pleasant Hill is acting coordinator of the 2015 event.

SEC Congregations March in Atlanta Pride!



Kirkwood UCC, Decatur UCC, Virginia-Highland Church, and Praxis UCC marched together in the Atlanta Pride parade on October 13th. This was the second year that the churches marched together under the Southeast Conference UCC banner and it was a time to celebrate our the unity of our extravagant welcome as well as to get to know one another in our broader community in the UCC.

ICM Reflections



Some Money Talk...

As we move along in the Fall Season of the Church Year, stewardship is a normal topic of

"This celebration and the building in particular, represents what can happen when we partner with God and do our part. God is always faithful. When we follow faithfully, God gives us dreams and ways in which to fulfill those dreams. We lift all the praise for this new sanctuary to God. It is a testament to us and others that God is still moving, working and speaking among the Church at large. Our goal is to use the building as a tool to reach more lost souls who need love and hope in their lives. We now have space to extend the lavish welcome we feel God expects of us."

Holy Trinity would like to welcome everyone to attend the opening worship celebration and then join them for lunch after the service. They will have some of Nashville's most popular food trucks on site for everyone to order what they would like. Coffee, Tea, Water, and Dessert will be provided by Holy Trinity.

STILLSPEAKING YOUTH

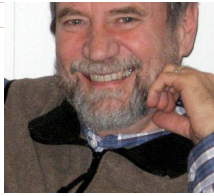
Save the Date: Winter Youth Retreat

Mark down January 17-20 on your calendars for the annual Winter Youth Retreat at Blowing Rock Conference Center! Each year the retreat brings youth together from across the Southeast and Southern Conferences to explore themes of justice, have fun, and connect on the faith journey. More details will be coming soon. [Registration materials can be downloaded by clicking here.](#)



United Church Fund Investor Conference

Attention All Church Treasurers, Endowment Chairs, Church Finance Committees and interested SEC persons.....



conversation at all levels of the Church. Many local congregations face growing pressures as their numbers diminish (with a concomitant loss of older members who often have a history of higher giving patterns); buildings age and need ongoing maintenance and/or even massive remodeling; utilities keep rising and so, too, do expensive items like building, casualty, and health insurance.

As I experience life with the SECUCC, I see such trends, and I want to assure you that you are not alone! The same patterns are occurring throughout the Protestant world, and the trickle down impact is significant for the Conferences and for the National UCC.

As I see it, the SECUCC faces a significant challenge in building its 2014 budget ... unless our 50+ congregations come through with surprises in Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM) giving in these closing months of 2013. And at the National level of the UCC, the Collegium has just informed its staff of some 140+ that it will be necessary to trim \$2 million from the 2014 budget. This is grim, because already over the past decade the National UCC has cut its staff by about 50%. Now more cuts in staff (and very likely even some programs) will be necessary. This severe impact has been caused by two different causes hitting at the same time: shrinking OCWM (at the national level a drop from what used to be over \$12 million/year to now a total of \$6 million) AND big losses in endowed funds from the recent recession.

I do understand that churches need to be maintained and kept up to date ... and that doing so costs much more than used to be the case. We have a number of congregations here in the SECUCC that have done major work on their church buildings in recent times, and some of these have been intentional about building a tithe to the Conference capital campaign into their respective capital funding plans. I applaud all who have done so, and it should be a big boost the Conference for the future. At the same time, I urge all who are able to think in similar terms about their OCWM giving for the future. In particular I lift up one of our newest congregations, Holy Trinity in Nashville (which will be celebrating the dedication of their new sanctuary on November 17, 2013) - not only did Holy Trinity plan a substantial gift to the Conference capital campaign, but they also tithe to OCWM on a monthly

The annual United Church Fund Investor Conference is coming to Charleston, South Carolina January 17 and 18, 2014. ICM Randy Hyvonen attended the event last January and found it to be very informative and well planned. This conference will include a panel discussion on United Church Funds' response to the UCC's fossil fuels resolution, along with workshops on impact investing, endowment policy essentials, endowment fundraising, and dynamic keynote speakers.

The event will be hosted in the South East Conference, so it would be great to see a number of our churches attend. Please join us there!

[Click here to get more information.](#)

Generosity Corner

Approach giving as a year-round, whole life spiritual practice.

A practice forms us as disciples:

We grow into more generous people as we give generously.



Love Has No Borders

Rev. Angie Wright, pastor of Beloved Community UCC in Birmingham is the editor for "Love Has No Borders", a recently released book detailing the faith-based struggle against the HB56 immigration law in Alabama. She writes:



On April 27, 2011, sixty-two killer tornadoes ripped through Alabama, destroying homes, lives, and entire communities. Two weeks later, another disaster struck Alabama - HB56, the most

basis: 10% of whatever comes in as church income each month gets sent to the Conference office as OCWM! This supports the Conference and enables us to send on a tithe to the National UCC.

As I travel around the Conference I look for such stories. I also look for stories of churches addressing issues presented by their buildings. I know that in many instances, the cost of such repairs are so daunting that there is no room for tithing above that cost. One such instance is faced by First Congregational UCC in Savannah where a roof that has been leaking for some time (a metal roof placed on the sanctuary when it was built twelve decades ago) now needs to be torn off and replaced - a huge expense for a small congregation. A similar story is true in Huntsville where the United Church there is in the midst of a large upgrade of a number of items needing repair and replacement: heating and cooling system parts, roofing, siding, parking lot resurfacing, and a long laundry lists of a number of other items that need attention. Both Savannah and Huntsville should be in good shape when these matters have been addressed, and we need to hold them in our thoughts and prayers as they take these important steps.

I do know the difference between preaching and meddling, so my stewardship message should be read as preaching: typical fall stewardship emphasis. If I wanted to go further and meddle then I would begin to argue (as some do these days) that perhaps we should give up our buildings and go back to living as house church groups. I do think there is a place for the latter (maybe even the future of most new church growth), but I also value our larger spaces - where our folk can gather and program in ways that meet their own needs and at the same time serve as public space for all kinds of groups that need a place to meet (A.A., study groups, scouts, etc.) I also believe that the churches still have a vital role to play as sites for building up the arts, and so there is a defensible argument for instruments, aesthetic spaces, etc.

Finally, I am interested in helping local congregations meet their needs, and among the important tools I like to mention are these programs of the National UCC: the Cornerstone Fund for investment and for loans for local church building needs; the Local Church Building and Loan Fund for new and renewing congregations; United Church Funds for investment of local church dollars; and the UCC Insurance Board for property and casualty insurance. If you have any questions about any of these, do feel free to call me!

draconian anti-immigrant law passed by any state in the nation. Instead of working to provide disaster relief for a stricken people, Alabama legislators fulfilled campaign promises to criminalize illegal immigrants for simply setting foot in Alabama. The intent of the law was to make every aspect of their lives so miserable that they would self-deport.

Love Has No Borders is the witness of faith leaders in Alabama: when we stood up, spoke out, marched with our immigrant neighbors, and defied man-made barriers that divided God's people, real change took place. People of faith in Alabama drew a new line in the sand, guided by their unshakeable belief that Love Has No Borders.



An excellent sermon from Rev. Ellen Sims, pastor of Open Table UCC in Mobile is also featured in the book. You can order the book from Greater Birmingham Ministries at www.gbm.org. You can download a flyer for the book by clicking [here](#).

Also, this would be an interesting resource to discuss with a group. You can get a 10% discount for orders of 10 or more books.



Extravagance UCC Online Church Start Begins



The new online church community, Extravagance UCC began it gathering this week with a diversity of

And may God bless all of your houses of worship - may they be places that meet your needs and feed your souls as you gather to praise God!

-- **Shalom, Randy**



UCC Support for Those Affected by Typhoon Haiyan

On Tuesday, November 12, the United Church of Christ issued an appeal for \$250,000 for Typhoon Haiyan response.

Typhoon Haiyan has killed as many as 10,000 people in the Philippines, with the devastation it caused being described as "absolute bedlam," the BBC reported.

Hardest hit is the central Philippine city of Tacloban, which is said to be flattened and where hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced. The damage to communications, airports and roads is hampering initial relief efforts, according to Ric Jontarciego, United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) Disaster Coordinator.

The UCC will support early response and recovery efforts of partners in the ACT Alliance and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. Initial response activities will likely include material resource provision, emergency shelter items, drinking water and cash for work programs.

[You can see the full story and donate directly online by clicking here](#)

leaders from around the UCC bringing their creative juices to the community at the LINK event in Cleveland.

If you are interested in checking out how this new online community is forming you can check out worship and keynote addresses through recordings of their live stream from this past week. [You can access the video by clicking here.](#)

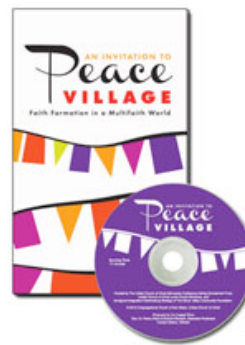
[You can also connect with Extravagance UCC through their website by clicking here.](#)

UCC grant will fund 20 more houses in Haiti

The Fuller Center for Housing began work in Haiti three years ago to help families recover from the devastating Jan. 12, 2010, earthquake. Since then, 111 permanent Fuller Center homes have gone up in the poverty-stricken nation. The UCC has been part of that work, and 10 Fuller Center homes were completed in Croix-des-Bouquets thanks to a \$50,000 UCC grant. Pleased with the results of that effort, the UCC has now agreed to give The Fuller Center another \$114,000 to build 20 more homes in Haiti - 18 in the Croix-des-Bouquets area with The Fuller Center's Homes from the Heart partner and two in Lambi with The Fuller Center's other main building partner in Haiti, Grace International. The grant money also will help fund the installation of 18 latrines for the Croix-des-Bouquet homes. Fuller Center Director of U.S. Field Operations Rev. Kirk Lyman-Barner, who also serves as the pastor of Praxis UCC in Americus, has been a part of connecting the UCC with this work, and also helped to lead the joint trip to the Congo with members of the Southeast Conference and the Fuller Center. [You can read the full article here on the Fuller Center website.](#)

Resources:

Build a Peace Village in Your Community



Peace Village is an interfaith peace education summer day camp for kids ages 7-13. It was inspired by the Congregational Church of San Mateo, CA; Peninsula Temple Beth El; and Muslim Children's Garden School, all of whom came together to address a community need for interfaith collaboration and relationship building.

UCC Resources are offering "An Invitation to Peace Village: Faith Formation in a Multifaith World" a DVD resource that lifts up the effective model of interfaith, faith formation from this powerful ministry. The accompanying handbook offers an engaging and helpful "how-to" framework for cultivating a Peace Village in your own congregation and community.

UCC Resources is making this available for only 6.99 with free shipping so that everyone can get their hands on it. [You can order this resource by clicking here.](#)



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